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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2197
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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 000729

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/RSP
NSC FOR E. PHU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PDEM](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: KEY PARTY DIVIDED ON DECISION NOT TO LINK WITH
PRESIDENT

REF: JAKARTA 724 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Amid a flood of reports and rumors about party jockeying, a deeply divided Golkar Party is scrambling to regroup after its April 23 decision to split from President Yudhoyono ahead of the July 8 presidential election. VP and Party Chair Jusuf Kalla is trying to remain in control of the party, even as he steers it away from Yudhoyono. Golkar factions are trying to keep the door open to reunite with the President. Yudhoyono has not completely closed the door to a Golkar alliance but has not yet fully revealed his hand. END SUMMARY.

VP TRIES TO REMAIN IN CONTROL OF PARTY

¶2. (C) Golkar Chair and Vice President Jusuf Kalla's brash move to force Golkar's break with President Yudhoyono's Partai Demokrat (PD) in order to preserve his hold on party power has thrown Golkar into disarray. Knowing that Yudhoyono would not choose him as the repeat VP candidate and that his influence within Golkar was waning, Kalla surprised everyone on April 23 by railroading the party's national leadership meeting into giving him the mandate to run for president on the Golkar ticket (see reftel). He has until next week to put together a coalition that would get him on the July 8 presidential election ballot. (Note: Reftel reviews an April 24 conversation with a key adviser to VP Kalla. The adviser underscores the depth of the rift with Yudhoyono. Seriously downplaying the chances of his boss, the VP, the adviser also asserted that Yudhoyono is the "massive favorite" to win re-election.)

¶3. (C) Kalla is in a bind. Given the difficulty he may well have at putting together an effective coalition, and the even more remote possibility that he can defeat Yudhoyono if he qualified to run, Kalla's success in getting Golkar's backing would appear to be pyrrhic at best. However, the focus of Kalla and his supporters is simply to remain in control of the party at this point, according to observers.

GOLKAR FACTIONS PRESS FOR YUDHOYONO

¶4. (C) Meanwhile, factions backing former Golkar Chair Akbar Tandjung are fighting to gain control of the party and to salvage Golkar's partnership with Yudhoyono. The April 23 Golkar leadership meeting was engineered by Kalla and excluded former party leaders such as Tandjung, subdistrict party heads, and parliamentary faction leaders, all of whom might have tried to block the decision to reject re-association with Yudhoyono, senior Golkar MP Marsuki Darusman told DepPol/C. In a clear rejection of Kalla's leadership, Tandjung addressed this group at a separate hotel at the same time as the leaders' meeting on April 23.

15. (C) Darusman said the party is deeply divided, commenting, "it is really bad now." The anti-Kalla faction is now maneuvering to reverse the April 23 decision when the party reconvenes next week, he said. Ideally, they can agree to stay with PD without ousting Kalla as chair, but otherwise this faction will try to oust Kalla. Tandjung would be a leading candidate to take his place. Golkar must be part of the ruling coalition, Darusman emphasized; the party (which is known for patronage and money politics) is not designed to be an opposition party.

ADVANTAGE TO YUDHOYONO

16. (C) Yudhoyono, at this point, has many more options. While PD strategists have told us that his first choice is to stay with Golkar for the VP slot, he is not revealing his cards. He stated after the leadership meeting that it would be difficult for him to choose a Golkar VP given that Golkar is divided, but did not rule it out. Some speculate that Tandjung would be his first choice as VP.

17. (C) If Yudhoyono does not pair with a Golkar candidate, then he would be likely to go with someone who is loyal, politically independent, and competent, according to the signals he has put out. The current buzz is that State Secretary Hatta Rajasa is the leading candidate, meeting all these criteria, but there are many other names being thrown around.

HUME